

CLASSIC DRIVER

Bentley Drivers Club, Silverstone, 7 August 2010 - Review



The real joy of the Bentley Drivers Club's annual race meeting at Silverstone, now in its 61st year, is the chance to see modern Bentleys competing against their Vintage counterparts.

As Sebastian Welch, Competitions Captain of the BDC, put it, "It was particularly heartening to see everything from a very early, front-axled 3 litre Bentley up to the mighty, new GT, colourfully vinyl-wrapped, just as owners have tuned and developed Bentleys for some 80 years."

That vinyl-wrapped Continental GT (strongly reminiscent of the latest BMW art car, to our eyes at least...) is something to behold. Bought by Surrey-based Phantom Motor Cars back in January, the 6.0 W12 was electronically tuned to give 700bhp but, other than this power boost and an interior strip-down, it's been pretty much left as a standard road car. The minor racing mods were only finished last week, after which the brightly coloured, road-registered car was driven to the BDC meeting without a single test lap under its belt. Yet, in the hands of Phantom Motors' Stuart Worthington, it won the Bentley Scratch Race outright - beating the Turbo R of Stuart's brother Simon into second place.





As Simon Worthington explained, “There’s a huge speed differential between the modern cars and pre-War Bentleys such as the 3/4½ litre of Clive Morley, which came fifth. This just adds to the fun – for us, at least. For a start, there’s an awful lot of overtaking...”

And, as Worthington pointed out, “We drove the car home afterwards. I could take it out to do the shopping tonight, if I needed to.”

But it’s not just the modern Bentleys that are driven to the meeting under their own steam. In the true spirit of the marque, one competitor drove his 4½ litre Bentley all the way from Brussels, before racing it on track. “Although many of the cars are true museum pieces, they’re not kept in museums – we race them as they were always intended to be,” said Clive Morley – one of three generations of his family racing at Silverstone.



Mike Haig, another of the racers, showed the expected stoical spirit when commenting that “even the unpredictable weather added to the mix – in a positive way”.

The Bentley Drivers Club continued the long-held tradition of inviting other marques to attend the meeting, with two hugely entertaining Morgan races plus others which featured Bugatti, Jaguar, Lagonda, Allard, Frazer Nash, Aston Martin and Austin-Healey, to name but a few.

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